

HONORING LIEUTENANT GENERAL
(RETIRED) ROBERT LEWIS
"SAM" WETZEL

HON. SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor an extraordinary American patriot, soldier, mentor, and hero, Lt. Gen. (RET.) Robert Lewis "Sam" Wetzel. He transitioned on Thursday, January 20, 2022. His Funeral Mass was held on Friday, January 28, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. at St. Anne Catholic Church in Columbus, Georgia followed by a military burial at the Fort Benning National Cemetery and visitation at the National Infantry Museum and Soldier Center.

Lt. Gen. (RET.) Robert Lewis "Sam" Wetzel was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia on October 6, 1930. His impressive 34-year military career began after he graduated from Irving High School in 1948. He planned to attend Purdue University, but ultimately went to the United States Military Academy at West Point. After graduating from West Point in 1952 as an Infantry Officer, he was immediately deployed to Korea, where he served as a Company Commander. In 1961, as a captain, he commanded a mechanized infantry company in Germany.

In 1968, as a Lieutenant Colonel, Wetzel was deployed to South Vietnam to serve as the commander of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment (United States), also known as the "Polar Bears". During a firefight, an enemy bullet grazed his forehead leaving a small but permanent scar. The abrasion and his actions during the Vietnam War prompted his nomination for a Purple Heart, which he declined, however, believing that his wound was not severe enough to warrant being awarded a Purple Heart.

Following his return from Vietnam, he was promoted to the rank of Colonel and assumed command of a brigade at Fort Carson, Colorado. In 1975, following promotion to the rank of Brigadier General, he was sent to West Germany, where he commanded the First Infantry Division. Following his command with the First Infantry Division, he received his second star from the Commander of all European and American forces in Europe, the renowned, General Alexander Haig.

Wetzel went on to serve as General Haig's Chief of Staff in Belgium from 1978 to 1979. During this time, he worked with his staff to develop a response to the Soviet Union's deployment of nuclear missiles in Europe. The ultimate strategy was to deploy the Pershing II missiles in Europe, so that Moscow could be hit in a matter of minutes, shortening the response time for the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, domestic political battles began in NATO countries about deploying the Pershing II missiles, and that strategy was deferred. After his tenure as General Haig's Chief of Staff, Wetzel commanded the Third Infantry Division in Würzburg, where he led his division to victory in the annual war games staged in West Germany.

In 1981, Wetzel was diagnosed with what was thought to be terminal melanoma cancer and was given less than a year to live. During this time, the Army offered him full medical disability in exchange for retirement, but he re-

fused the offer, signed a waiver, and remained on active duty. The Army sent him back to the United States, where he managed to make a full recovery and assume command of the infantry training center in Fort Benning, Georgia.

In 1983, Wetzel was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and sent to Germany as the Deputy Commander in Chief of U.S. Forces in Europe as the NATO allies had finally approved the Pershing II plan. Upon his arrival, Wetzel's main responsibility was to receive and deploy the Pershing II missiles amid anti-war demonstrations all over Europe. It is argued that the Pershing II plan was one of three key factors that contributed to the defeat of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

In 1986, Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Colin Powell, succeeded Wetzel in command of V Corps in Frankfurt, Germany. This was his last assignment before retirement.

Following his military service, he continued to serve his community and make a positive impact in the lives of others. His contributions include serving as the Commander in Chief of the Military Order of the World Wars, a Veterans organization of commissioned officers, which is committed to promoting national security, patriotism, good citizenship, and service to one's country. During his stint as Commander in Chief, he worked tirelessly to educate the public, local civic clubs like Kiwanis and Rotary, and the media on national security issues while also instilling patriotism and leadership skills in young people through Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, JROTC, ROTC, and other youth programs.

Among his numerous honors and awards are the Army Distinguished Service Medal, a Bronze Star, two Legions of Merit, six Air Medals, a Joint Superior Service Medal, a Meritorious Service Medal, and a Combat Infantryman's Badge with Star.

Lt. Gen. (RET.) Wetzel accomplished much throughout his life, but none of this would have been possible without his enduring faith in God and the love and support of his wife, Eileen; their children, Margaret, Robert, Eileen, Theodore, Patricia, Catherine, and Michael; and a host of other family, friends, and associates, all of whom will miss him dearly.

Madam Speaker, I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join my wife, Vivian, and me, along with the more than 730,000 residents of the Second Congressional District of Georgia in paying tribute to Lt. Gen. (RET.) Robert Lewis "Sam" Wetzel for his extraordinary service to his nation, his community, and to humankind. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, and all those who mourn his loss.

HONORING AND CONGRATULATING
THE SERVICE OF LT. COL. JOHN
"KARL" MARKS

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate the service of one of the highest-time fighter pilots in the U.S. Air Force, Lt. Col. John "Karl" Marks.

On September 1, 2021, U.S. Air Force Reserve pilot, Lt. Col. Marks made history when-

ever he became the only pilot to reach 7,000 hours in the A-10C Warthog; in addition to becoming one of the highest-time fighter pilots in the U.S. Air Force. Lt. Col. Marks is assigned to the 442nd Fighter Wing based out of Whiteman Air Force Base. He has an impressive career which spans over three decades with over 3,610 flights, 1,150 combat hours from thirteen combat deployments in multiple theaters of operations, and his most memorable combat mission of the destruction of 23 Iraqi tanks in a trio of missions during Desert Storm.

It has been said that Lt. Col. Marks is a humble and outstanding attack pilot who loves to fly and brings an immense amount of invaluable knowledge to the 442nd Fighter Wing. Among the incredible feat of achieving 7,000 hours in a single aircraft type, Lt. Col. Marks has had memorable missions from Desert Storm I, Desert Storm II, and from Afghanistan. During his time in Afghanistan's Kunar Valley in 2014, Lt. Col. Marks was able to help extract a Jaguar 20 squadron which was surrounded by the Taliban with no casualties. This is just one of the many successful combat missions Lt. Col. Marks has had.

It is with great honor that I recognize the dedicated service of U.S. Air Force Pilot Lt. Col. John "Karl" Marks. Please join me in congratulating this true American hero for his dedicated valor and service to our Nation.

IN RECOGNITION OF SERVICE OF
NAMI NEW HAMPSHIRE EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR KENNETH NOR-
TON

HON. CHRIS PAPPAS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 1, 2022

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Kenneth Norton's nearly 20 years of service to the National Alliance of Mental Illness of New Hampshire. For the past two decades, Ken has served his community as a steadfast advocate for mental health services and suicide prevention leading the way before many in today's society recognized the importance of behavioral health.

Ken started with NAMI NH in 2003 to help create and grow prevention programming and spread awareness to policy makers, providers, and families across our state. By focusing his efforts on the organizations three cornerstones of support, education and advocacy, Ken has significantly expanded NAMI's presence in New Hampshire after stepping into the role of Executive Director in 2011. Under his leadership, the staff of NAMI NH, the budget, and the number of people served has quadrupled in size recognized by their well-deserved Non-profit Impact Award from the NH Center for Nonprofits in 2019.

By working with lawmakers and the public advocates such as NAMI NH and other mental health advocates, Congress has delivered expanded funding opportunities to prevent, educate, and treat our communities in need. Using these new grant opportunities NAMI NH offers Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Mental Health Awareness & Deescalation training for our police, fire, and EMS. This allows our first responders to learn how to best manage individuals experiencing mental illness so they